



NEWS RELEASE

# Hexcel, NIAR Break Ground on New Hexcel Applications Center at Wichita State University

2026-05-28

## New Facility Will Accelerate Integrated, End-to-End Composite Development

WICHITA, Kan.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Hexcel Corporation (NYSE: HXL), a global leader in advanced composite materials, today announced the groundbreaking of the Hexcel Applications Center at Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR). The new center marks a significant expansion of Hexcel's long-standing collaboration with NIAR and reflects a shared commitment to advancing composite materials, automated processing, and aerospace manufacturing innovation.

"This investment represents a pivotal step in how we support aerospace and defense customers, from material innovation through advanced manufacturing and structural realization," said Tom Gentile, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer & President, Hexcel Corporation. "By combining Hexcel's materials science and application development expertise with NIAR's world-class automated processing capabilities, we are creating a powerful ecosystem that accelerates innovation and delivers practical, manufacturable solutions for our customers."

The Hexcel Applications Center at NIAR's Advanced Technologies Lab for Aerospace Systems (ATLAS) further strengthens Kansas' position as a global hub for aerospace research, design, and manufacturing, while highlighting the importance of collaboration between industry, academia, and government.

"Wichita has long been a hub for innovation and a leader in global aerospace and defense manufacturing," said U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran. "The groundbreaking for the new Hexcel Applications Center at Wichita State University is an important milestone that further solidifies Wichita as the Air Capital of the World. I appreciate Hexcel's decision to

collaborate with NIAR and invest in our workforce, underscoring the significant role that Kansans play in shaping the future of aerospace and national security.”

Hexcel’s collaboration with NIAR is grounded in complementary strengths. NIAR is widely recognized for its leadership in advanced manufacturing and automated composite processing, and advanced materials properties characterization, while Hexcel brings deep expertise in materials science and application development. The Hexcel Applications Center will enable close day-to-day collaboration between Hexcel and NIAR engineers and specialists, providing customers access to an integrated development environment unlike any other in the industry.

“The Hexcel Applications Center at NIAR will bring together world-class expertise, capability, and technology in one collaborative environment,” said John Tomblin, WSU Executive Vice President of Research and Industry and Defense Programs and NIAR Executive Director. “This collaboration will significantly enhance the resources available to our aerospace and defense customers, enabling them to develop, scale, and validate advanced composite solutions using next generation manufacturing technology.”

Hexcel’s collaboration with NIAR is designed to deliver a seamless, end-to-end composite development pathway for customers. Early-stage material innovation and application development are driven by Hexcel’s Applications Lab in Salt Lake City, Utah, where teams focus on materials science, process development, and non-automated composite activities. This work will feed directly into the Hexcel Applications Center in Wichita, Kansas, where customers gain access to a broad range of automated composite manufacturing equipment and processing expertise within NIAR’s ecosystem. Final structural build and validation activities are supported by Hexcel’s Kent, Washington facility, which brings deep expertise in composite structures and the ability to produce and evaluate full-scale articles.

Together, this coordinated approach will connect materials development, advanced automation, and structural realization, enabling Hexcel and NIAR to help customers move efficiently from concept to manufacturable solutions.

## About Hexcel

**Hexcel Corporation** is a global leader in advanced lightweight composites technology. We provide innovative, high-performance material solutions that are lighter, stronger and tougher – shaping a world that moves farther, smarter and more efficiently. Our broad and unrivaled product range includes carbon fiber, specialty reinforcements, prepregs and other fiber-reinforced matrix materials, honeycomb, resins, engineered core, and composite structures for use in commercial aerospace, defense and space platforms as well as industrial applications.

## About NIAR

The mission of Wichita State University’s National Institute for Aviation Research is to strengthen university research capabilities; provide applied learning opportunities for students; and support the aviation and manufacturing

industries while driving innovation and prosperity for the community, region and state. NIAR provides research, testing, certification and training for aviation and manufacturing technologies. Established in 1985, NIAR has a \$400 million annual budget, 2,100 personnel and over two million square feet of laboratory and office space in six locations across Wichita, Kansas, and one in Huntsville, Alabama. [wichita.edu/niar](http://wichita.edu/niar)

Matthew Bates | Director, Marketing & Communications | [Matthew.Bates@Hexcel.com](mailto:Matthew.Bates@Hexcel.com) | 385-434-4736

Tracee Friess | A.V.P., Strategic Communication & Marketing, WSU-NIAR | [Tracee.Friess@idp.wichita.edu](mailto:Tracee.Friess@idp.wichita.edu) | 316-250-3428

Source: Hexcel Corporation